

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1007 Rams' Resilience Made them Super

Three months ago we talked about one of the key elements that leads any team to success. That element was on display yesterday in the Super Bowl. It was the number one reason the Los Angeles Rams sit atop the football world today. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll talk about that, next, on The Extra Point.

When we discussed resilience three months ago, I used the following example:

*Think of it this way. There are two little voices in our minds at all times. The one that spouts all the negative self-talk, doubts, and the "woe is me" victim mindset. The other voice is the positive one, the guide that tells us we are capable of great things, to push forward in the face of challenges, and it shines a light on our strengths, rather than our weaknesses.*

Going into the Super Bowl, the Rams had already lost the services of their starting tight end, Tyler Higbee. He was hurt in the win over the 49ers that propelled the Rams into the Super Bowl. Then, in the first quarter of the game yesterday, Kendall Blanton, his replacement was hurt.

That made the Rams tight end a guy named Brycen Hopkins, who had caught one pass in the past two seasons. Not ideal. Quarterback Matthew Stafford threw in his direction four times. Hopkins caught all four, and helped the Rams drive the ball down the field.

With Cincinnati double-teaming Rams' star receiver Cooper Kupp, Stafford's number two target, Odell Beckham, Jr., grabbed two passes for 52 yards, including the game's first touchdown. The Rams went up 13-3 and it seemed like they were poised to run away with the game. Then, disaster struck, as Beckham caught his foot on the artificial turf and went down in a heap, suffering a knee injury. He did not return to the game.

Without Beckham to worry about, the Bengals were now able to focus relentless pressure on Kupp, and the Rams' offense went nowhere, while Cincinnati scored to tighten the game.

The Bengals went ahead on the first play of the third quarter, then got the ball right back on an interception, and kicked a field goal. Now behind 20-13 and nothing working right, the Rams' season was hanging by a thread. There were 24 minutes of football left, and the TV game announcers began to talk about what a Rams loss would mean to the team.

As if it couldn't get worse, Stafford came up limping after a play. Rams fans held their breath. Without him, it would truly be over.

A lesser team might have crumbled, but the Rams had built a veteran roster, with a number of star players. They had seen bad times, knew what had to be done, and wouldn't shrink from the moment. They also had younger players who trusted the system.

They didn't flinch, they fought. They didn't worry who was left to make plays, they just made plays. It wasn't perfect, but they made progress. A field goal brought them within four points, and there wouldn't be another score until 89 seconds remained on the clock.

That's when Kupp, who had been stifled by the Bengals defenders, broke free and caught the pass from Stafford that won the game.

They had outplayed Tampa Bay three weeks earlier, got a big lead, then saw the Buccaneers roar back to tie the game inside of the final minute. If the game went to overtime, Tampa, with quarterback Tom Brady, might well end their season. With two passes to Kupp, and a field goal as time expired, the resilient Rams moved on to face the 49ers for the right to play the Bengals. (Con't.)

The 49ers led by 10 in the fourth quarter. The Rams scored the next 13 points, again winning by a field goal with no time left.

There were times in the playoffs, and certainly in yesterday's game, where the Rams were so close to seeing their dreams end in defeat.

Yet, it was their will, their resolve, their grit that saw them through. Maybe it was the little voices that told them they could do it if they just gave a little more — even if they weren't sure they had more to give.

In football, in business, in relationships, the people who win dig deep within themselves to find that "more."

There's something else. They learn from mistakes and the bad stuff that happens, but they don't dwell on it because they know they can't change it. They bend, but they don't break. That's the essence of being resilient.

All they focus on is the next play. That's where they can make a difference.

Resilience. It's a superpower. Just ask the Rams.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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